

Where we are in planning for Milan's future

**By Ross Williams, Chair
Milan Comprehensive Plan Special Review Board**

Why we need a Comprehensive Plan

New business proposals on Route 199; the development of the Carvel property along the Taconic Parkway for a major golf and recreation community of 975 homes; rapidly expanding subdivision growth; and potential applications for business uses of residential land including an industrial strength gravel mine -- these and other changes in Milan highlight the need to update the Town's 1986 Comprehensive Plan.

Population growth has exceeded the high range of expectations since that time and the residential growth pressures moving north along the Taconic corridor are threatening the rural, residential character of the Town of Milan.

Under New York State law,

land use laws must be guided by a town's Comprehensive Plan.

Work relaunched this year

Much work had been done in 2000 and 2001 including a town-wide mailed survey and public session on preferences.

Work was started again in April of this year with the appointment of a Milan Comprehensive Plan Special Review Board. The Board

started by reviewing the 1986 Plan. It was a solid document for the time and thoroughly lays out the characteristics of the Town and the challenges then facing it.

Our current work focuses on the changes in the Town and the new challenges we face in order to develop a series of recommendations to guide the Town as it manages record growth.

How to get express your opinion

- **In person:** Community Day: Saturday, Sept. 18th at noon at the recreation center
- **Online comments:** Town website at www.milan-ny.gov
- **Written comments** to Comprehensive Plan Board
Town of Milan, 20 Wilcox Circle, Milan, NY 12571
- **In person:** second and fourth Tuesday of each month. Regular meetings of the Comprehensive Plan Board are open for public comment.

The Milan Comprehensive Plan Special Review Board meets every second and fourth Tuesday at Wilcox Memorial Hall. All meetings are open to the public.

Plan Board Members include:

Ross Williams, Chair
Sheila Margiotta

Jack Grumet
Ray Pozzi

Bill Jeffway
Phil Zemke

Deborah Bergman, Admin.

Active subcommittees:

Infrastructure and Services, Natural and Cultural Resources, Housing Opportunities and Residential Development, Business Opportunities and Commercial Development, Land Use Reg's.

Surveys from the year 2000 and recent workshops show that citizens broadly agree on Milan’s future

Building on prior work

There was an effort by the prior Town administration to update the Comprehensive Plan in 2000 and 2001. Unfortunately, it got mired down in controversy over the proposal for a new Town Center and was never completed.

However, useful work to support a new plan was done at that time.

Many Town residents will recall they were asked to respond in 2000 to a mailed questionnaire. And some attended a Community Preference Survey workshop that visually examined the preferred land uses for the Town.

The questionnaire was mailed to all residents and landowners in Town and had a very high (for these type of surveys) return rate of 26%. More than half of the respondents had lived in Milan for over 10 years.

Citizens broadly agree on Milan’s future

Respondents to the mailed questionnaire were very clear in their preferences

- retain our rural character
- protect our environmental assets
- maintain the large lot residential nature of development

All topics related to open space and environmental protection received high positive responses. Support for agricultural, home-

based and small retail businesses were the only other topics receiving more than 50% support.

Large-lot, single-family development was the only form of housing encouraged by a majority at 72% of the respondents.

A minority of those responding supported the development of a Town Center.

The Community Preference Survey was conducted by the Rhinebeck consulting firm Greenplan, to provide a visual perspective of how these sentiments are translated to land use.

The conclusions of that survey highlighted preferences for managed growth, for the development of ridgeline protections in Town, for clustered housing to

What services are most important for Milan to develop and provide its residents?

Fire protection	77%
Ambulance service	70%
Town roads	48%
Trash collection	36%
Post Office	20%
Other	46%
Don't know	4%

permanently protect open space, for the use of earth tones in building, and for narrow roadbeds in residential areas.

As the town grows, what physical features are important to maintain?

	Most Important	Important	Less/Not Important
Scenic beauty	67%	30%	2%
Mature forests	66%	28%	6%
Open space	62%	31%	7%
Agricultural lands	59%	35%	6%
Scenic roads	57%	32%	11%
Stream corridors	57%	34%	9%
Trees along roads	54%	32%	14%
Historic buildings	51%	35%	14%
Ridgelines	50%	33%	17%
Stone walls	39%	33%	27%
Steep slopes	30%	28%	43%

This year's work

In May, the Comprehensive Plan Board held two public forums to discuss the vision of Milan's future.

Invited by a town-wide mailing, attendees were asked what they liked best about Milan, what they wanted to protect and preserve or to change about the Town, and what actions they felt should be taken.

The forums confirmed the results of the previous surveys.

Protecting the environment and preserving the rural residential character of the Town, which included protection of wetlands, preserving dark skies and quiet, expansion of protected open space, and limitations on both residential and commercial development were uppermost in participants' priorities.

All of this data -- the 1986 plan, the 2000 questionnaire results, the 2000 visual preference survey, and the results of the 2004 Public Forums -- were handed over to subcommittees established to look at Infrastructure and Services, Natural and Cultural Resources, Housing Opportunities and Residential Development, Business Opportunities and Commercial Development, and Land Use Regulation.

The subcommittees are diligently pursuing research on

Should efforts be made to limit new developments on ridgelines?

Yes: 69% No: 8% Don't Know: 23%

Do you think developers should be required to preserve open space in new developments?

Yes: 88% No: 3% Don't know: 9%

trends in these areas, on changes since the last Plan was completed, goals for the Town, and recommendations for Town action.

Your chances for input

In addition to the Public Forums completed in May, opportunities will be provided in the months ahead for citizens to participate in the shaping of Milan's Comprehensive Plan.

The Plan Board will have a booth at the upcoming Milan Community Day on September

18; in November a series of Public Workshops to discuss the Plan's findings and recommendations will be held; and after the publication of the draft Plan in early 2005, a public hearing will be held for feedback before finalizing the plan for presentation to the Town Board. The Board hopes to have all the issues and concerns of Milan's residents on the table and addressed before final recommendations are presented to the Town Board.

What types of housing should be encouraged?

Large lot Single Family	72%
Small lot Single Family	30%
Townhouses	15%
Two-family	15%
Housing above retail	17%
Senior housing	37%
Accessory apartments	17%

What type of business should be encouraged?

Agriculture	75%
Small Retail	60%
Home occupations	55%
Recreation	50%
Tourism	44%
Offices	35%
Light Industry	22%
Large Retail	9%